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THE
INDIAN COTTAGE.

OR, A
SEARCH AFTER TRUTH.

from
Translated from the French of

M. SAINT-PIERRE, (*J. B. de*)

AUTHOR OF THE
VOYAGE TO THE ISLE OF FRANCE,
THE STUDIES OF NATURE,
SHIPWRECK, OR PAUL AND MARY, &c.



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M DCC XCVII.





INTRODUCTION.



INTO the following little tale I have endeavoured to throw more truths than are to be found in many histories. It pourtrays the manners of the natives of India, and is founded on a real historical anecdote with which it commences.

Here let me assert, that in the present undertaking, it has by no means been my intention to place, in an absurd and ridiculous point
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of view, the learned societies of Europe. I have, notwithstanding, much reason to complain of them, not in respect to myself, but on account of the interest of truth, which they often persecute when it contradicts their systems.

I wish to express my obligations to several learned Englishmen, who, without a personal knowledge of me, and simply through an esteem for the sciences, have honoured my works* with their approbation.

* These are, a Voyage to the Isle of France—The Studies of Nature—The Wishes of a Solitary—and Paul and Virginia, a beautiful romance.

The

INTRODUCTION.

The character I am about to give of one of their brethren, is an unequivocal proof of my esteem for their nation.

What can be more praise-worthy than a search after knowledge in foreign countries, the object of the late Dilettanti Society in England — and an endeavour to extend its genial influence to savage nations, in which light I consider the voyages of the immortal Cook, of Sir Joseph Banks, &c. Such enterprises interest humanity at large.

The former of these undertakings has been lately imitated in Den-

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mark, the latter in France:—both of them, alas! unsuccessfully. Of twelve learned Danish travellers, one only lived to return; and the catastrophe of the unfortunate de la Peyrouse and his companions is but too certain.

It is not therefore that I blame science in itself, but I am desirous to shew that learned bodies, by their ambition, their jealousy, and their prejudices, too frequently become obstacles to its progress.

My particular aim is to alleviate the distresses of the human race in India. It is my wish to afford succour

succour to the unfortunate, and to this sentiment I give an universal extension. If philosophy was formerly brought from India to Europe, why should it not revert in our day, from civilized Europe to India, in its turn become barbarous?

At Calcutta a society of learned Englishmen has been lately formed, which may tend to root out the prejudices of the East, and thus compensate for the calamities of European wars and European commerce.

To

To make my arguments more graceful and agreeable, I have put them into the form of a tale. By tales men are every where rendered attentive to truth.

It has been said with more wit than reason, that fable had its birth in the despotic countries of the East, where it was employed as a veil to the truth, to the end that the latter might reach the ears of tyrants. I will ask, however, whether a Sultan would not be more offended at seeing himself painted emblematically as an owl or a leopard, than after nature? And whether reflected truths would not
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gall him as much at the least as direct ones.

An English Ambassador at the Court of Selim-Cha, Emperor of Mogul, relates, that this very despotic prince, having caused to be opened, whilst he was by, some trunks sent from England, to take out a few presents destined for himself, was greatly surpris'd at finding a painting, representing a Venus leading a Satyr by the nose.

“He fancied,” says the narrator, “that this painting had been made in derision of the people of Asia, who were represented in it by the black and horned Satyr, as being
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of the same complexion; and that the Venus which led the Satyr by the nose, was symbolical of the great ascendancy the women in that country have over the men."

The Ambassador, to whom the painting was addressed, found it a matter of no small difficulty to destroy the effect it had wrought on the mind of the Mogul: for which purpose he gave him an idea of our fables.

On this occasion he recommends in the most express manner, to the Directors of the British East-India Company, to avoid sending in future,

ture any allegorical paintings to India, "where the princes," says he, are very suspicious." Suspicion is, indeed, one of the principal characteristics of despots; and I am fully persuaded that fables have on no account been invented for them, unless it has been to flatter them.

In general, a taste for fables is spread over the whole earth, but prevails much more in free than in despotic countries. Savage nations found their traditions upon fables. There is no country in which they have been more common than in Greece, where all the objects of
c nature,

nature, of policy, and of religion, were merely the result of certain metamorphoses. Few illustrious families there but had some animal in the number of their ancestors, and who did not reckon amongst their he and she cousins, bulls, swans, nightingales, doves, crows, or magpies. We may remark that the English, in their literature, have a particular fondness for allegory, although truth may be spoken very freely amongst them. The Asiatics, in the time of Esop, had a similar bent; but we no longer meet with fabulists amongst them, although their country is filled with Sultans.

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Those who have approached the nearest to nature, and who have consequently been the most free, have had the strongest propensity to adorn truth with fables: 'tis an effect of the love itself of truth, which is the sentiment of the laws of nature.

Truth is the light of the soul, as the physical light is the truth of bodies—the two animated form the science of what is. The former clears up objects, the latter displays to us their uses: and, as all light derives its origin from the sun, so does all truth originate with God, of whom that planet is the most sensible image.

Few men can support the pure light of the sun. It is on account of the weakness of our eyes, that nature has furnished us with eye-lids, to veil them to a necessary degree;—that she has planted the earth with forests, whose green foliage tenders to us pleasant and transparent shades;—and that she has diffused in the air vapours and clouds, to weaken the too lively rays of the planet of day.

In the same way few men can embrace truths purely metaphysical. It is owing to the weakness of our understanding, that nature has provided us with ignorance, as the eye-lid

eye-lid of the soul. By this device the soul gradually opens herself to truth;—admits no more of it than she can support:—encompasses herself by fables beneath the shade of which she contemplates it;—and when she wishes to soar to the Divinity himself, she veils him by allegories and mysteries, to be enabled to support his lustre.

We should not see the light of the sun, did it not rest intermediately upon bodies, or at least upon clouds. Beyond our own atmosphere it escapes us, and dazzles us at its source. 'Tis the same with truth, which we should not be able to

to seize, did it not fix itself upon sensible events, or at least upon metaphors and comparisons which reflect it; in its passage to us it requires an intervening body. Our intellects have no hold upon truths purely metaphysical; they are dazzled by those that flow from the Divinity, and can only embrace those which rest upon his works.

It is for this last reason that the language of civilized nations paints nothing, because it is filled with vague and abstracted ideas. On the other hand that of nations in a state of simplicity and nature is extremely

extremely expressive, because it is filled with similitudes and images.

The former are accustomed to conceal their sentiments ; the latter to extend them. But as it often happens that clouds, scattered in a thousand fantastic shapes, decompose the rays of the sun into tints richer and more varied than those which colour the regular works of nature, so do fables reflect truth more extensively than real events. They transport it into all the kingdoms, appropriating to its use, animals, trees, elements—and throw from it a thousand reflections. Thus play the rays of the sun, without

without extinguishing in the water, where they reflect the objects of the earth and skies, and double their beauties by consonances.

Ignorance, therefore, is as necessary to truth, as the shadow is to the light. From the first the harmonies of our understanding are formed, as those of our sight are composed from the latter.

Moralists have almost always confounded ignorance with error. Ignorance, simply considered, and without the truth with which it harmonizes so agreeably, is the repose of our intelligence—it makes

Error, on the contrary, is the work of man; it is always an evil; —'tis a false light which shines to lead us astray. I cannot better compare it than to the glare of a fire which consumes the habitations it illumines. It is worthy of remark that there is not a single moral or physical evil but has an error for its principle. Tyrannies, slavery, and wars, are founded on political errors, nay even on sacred ones,

for the tyrants who have propagated them, have constantly derived them from the Divinity, or for some virtue, to render them respected by their subjects.

It is, notwithstanding, very easy to distinguish error from truth. Truth is a natural light which shines of itself throughout the whole earth, because it springs from God. Error is an artificial light which needs to be fed incessantly, and which can never be universal, because it is nothing more than the work of man. Truth is useful to all men; —error is profitable but to a few, and is hurtful to the generality, because

because individual interest, when it separates itself from it, is inimical to general interest.

Particular care should be taken not to confound fiction with error. Fiction is the veil of truth, whilst error is its phantom: and the former has been often invented to dissipate the latter. But, however, innocent it may be in its principle, it becomes dangerous when it assumes the leading quality of error, that is to say, when it is turned to the particular profit of any set of men.

For example.—It was of little moment in old times that the moon,

under the name of Diana, was made a Goddess of perpetual celibacy, who presided over hunting. This allegory implied that the light of the moon was favourable to hunters in laying their snares for deer, and that the exercise of hunting destroyed the passion of love.

There was no great mischief in it when the forest-pine was dedicated to the above Goddess: this tree became a rendezvous for the chase.

In the same way the oak was dedicated to Jupiter, the olive-tree to Minerva, the pine to Pan, the laurel

to Apollo, the myrtle to Venus, &c. Trees were also consecrated to demi-gods and heroes: the poplar was sacred to Hercules. Nymphs, shepherds, and shepherdesses partook of what remained of the vegetable creation—the jealous Clytia gave her jaundice and her attitude to the turnsol; and Adonis tinged with his blood the flower which bears his name. Botanists, in our time, when they discover new plants, apply them to the purposes of commemorating friendship and gratitude, by bestowing on them the names of their patrons and friends. Astronomers extend this idea to the planetary system.—The new planet
discovered

discovered by Herschell is by him called the *Georgium Sidus*: amongst his friends in most parts of Europe it bears his own name. Lastly, mariners apply to the continents, rivers and islands they discover, the names of saints, kings, commanders, events, conquests, and massacres, the remembrance of which they wish to perpetuate.

There was as yet no great harm done, when a hunter, to gain the protection of Diana, hung to a tree the head of a wolf. But when he suspended it to the entire skin of that animal, people were not wanted who contrived to turn it to their profit

profit. They built and dedicated to the Goddess a chapel, where they offered up not only the skin of a wolf, but sheep, to preserve from wolves the rest of the flock.

The offerings multiplied on account of the death of a monstrous wild boar, which had destroyed vines, and made a great havoc amongst the dogs and children in the neighbourhood.

The hunters attracted pilgrims, and pilgrims merchants. A town was soon built round the chapel, which, amongst so many credulous people, was not long without its oracles.

oracles. As victories were predicted, kings sent presents;—the chapel then became a temple, and the town a city furnished with pontiffs, magistrates and territories.

Taxes were soon levied on the people, to build magnificent temples, like that of Ephesus. And as fear operates on the human mind more effectually than confidence, to render the worship of Diana formidable, they offered up to her human sacrifices!

Thus did an allegory, invented for their happiness, concur to the misery of the people, because it was converted

converted to the profit of a particular city or temple.

Truth itself is injurious to men, when it becomes the inheritance of a tribe. There is certainly a wide space betwixt the toleration of the Evangelists, and the intolerance of the Inquisition—betwixt the precept given by Jesus Christ to his apostles, to shake the dust from their feet when they left a city where they were denied a reception—his indignation when they required of him that they should command fire from heaven to consume those who refused to receive them—and the destruction of the ancient

ent Indians in South America, and the butcheries of the Auto-da-fe.

At the gallery of the Tuilleries, to the right on entering the gardens, there is an Ionic column, which the celebrated Blondel, professor of architecture, used to shew as a model to his disciples. He pointed out to their observation, that all the columns which followed it diminished gradually in beauty. The first, said he, is the work of a famous sculptor, and the others have been made successively by artists who have deviated from its graces and proportions, according as they have been farther removed from it. He who sculptured the
second

second, succeeded pretty well in imitating the first; but he who formed the third, copied the second only. Thus, from copy to copy, the last, as you may observe, is exceedingly beneath the original.

I have many times compared the Evangelists to this beautiful column in the Tuilleries, and the works of the ancient commentators to the others which support the gallery. If we were to annex in continuation the modern commentators down to the present time, what hideous *columns* would their works display to us! and who in the tempests of life would trust to their support?

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Since truth is a ray of celestial light, it will shine always for all men, provided their windows be not darkened against it. But, in all its varieties, how many bodies founded to propagate it, on this very account that they can convert it to their profit, substitute to it that of their tapers or their lanterns! If they are powerful, they do not fail to persecute those who find it; and if they are not so, they oppose to them an inert force which prevents them from propagating it: 'tis for this reason that those who love it frequently retire from men and cities. Such is the truth I have wished to prove in this little work

work—happy if I can contribute to the felicity of a single unfortunate in Europe, by painting that of an Indian Paria in his cottage!



INTRODUCTION

The following is a list of the
names of the persons who
have been elected to the
office of the President of the
College.

THE
INDIAN COTTAGE.

THE Society of Dilettanti, established some years ago in London, for the purpose of philosophical researches, reckoned, amongst a very respectable list of members, several of the royal family of England, and a few potentates of the north of Europe.

By this society twenty men of letters were engaged, who were to travel over vari-

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ous parts of the globe, and to collect such information respecting the sciences, as would enlighten mankind and contribute to their happiness.

Each of these was provided with a book, containing a list of the questions, the solutions of which he was to procure on his travels: and notwithstanding the questions he was furnished with, were distinct from those given to the others, and adapted to the countries he was to visit, still were all the questions so reciprocally connected, that the light thrown upon one should necessarily extend to the rest.

The President of the Royal Society, who, with the help of his brethren, had digested them, was fully aware that the clearing up of one difficulty frequently depends upon the solution of another, and that again on the preceding one; which carries the investigation

tion of truth much farther than might be expected. To adopt, in short, the President's expressions, in the instructions given to the learned travellers, this was the most superb edifice any nation had yet erected, in favour of the progress of human knowledge: and this, he added, clearly proves the necessity of academic bodies, to collect together the truths scattered over the whole earth.

Besides his volume of questions to be elucidated, each traveller was commissioned to purchase on his way, the most ancient editions of the Bible, and the scarcest manuscripts of every kind: he was, at least, to spare no expence in procuring authentic copies of them. The society of Dilettanti had for this purpose, provided letters of recommendation to the British ambassadors and consuls residing at the places he was to pass through; and, what was still better, had supplied him with

good bills of exchange, indorsed by eminent bankers in London.

The most learned of these adventurers, whom I shall in future stile Doctor, to which title he had an indisputable claim, he understood the Hebrew, Arabic, and Indian languages. He was accordingly dispatched overland to India, the cradle of all the arts and sciences.

Directing his course to Holland, he visited the synagogue at Amsterdam, and the synod at Dordrecht. In France, he inspected the Sorbonne, and the Royal Academy of sciences.—In Italy a vast number of academies, museums, and libraries; amongst others, the museum at Florence, the library of St. Mark at Venice, and that of the vatican at Rome.

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When at Rome, he hesitated whether or not he should, before he steered eastwardly, consult the famous university of Salamanca in Spain: but dreading the inquisition, he chose rather to embark straight for Turkey. Arrived at Constantinople, an effendi, to whom he administered a fee, permitted him to ransack all the books in the mosque of Saint Sophia. He passed from thence into Egypt, amongst the Copts; then to the Maronites of Mount Lebanon, and the Monks of Mount Cassin; and proceeded afterwards to Sana, in Arabia; to Ispahan, Kandahar, Delhi, and Agra. At length, after a lapse of three years, he reached the banks of the Ganges, and found himself at Benares, the Athens of India, where he conferred with the Bramins.

The Doctor's collection of ancient editions, original books, scarce manuscripts, copies

copies, extracts, and annotations of every description, was by this time become more considerable than it had been the lot of any individual to collect before. Suffice it to say, that it consisted of ninety bales, weighing together nine thousand five hundred and forty pounds, troy weight. He was on the point of embarking for London, with this very rich cargo of knowledge, overjoyed at having surpassed the expectations of the Royal Society, when a very simple reflection filled his mind with sadness:

He considered, that after having conferred with the Jewish Rabbis, the Protestant ministers, the superintendants of the Lutheran churches, the Catholic doctors, the academicians of Paris, of la Crusca, of the Arcades, and of twenty-four others of the most celebrated academies in Italy, the Greek fathers, the Turkish Molhas, the Armenian

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Verbiests, the Persian Sedres and Casys, the Arabian Scheics, the ancient Parfes, the Indian Pandects—that after, I say, having conferred with all these, far from having elucidated any one of the three thousand five hundred questions, (for to that number they amounted) of the Royal Society, he had contributed only to multiply the doubts upon them. And as these questions were all connected with each other, it followed, in contradiction to the opinion of the illustrious president, that the obscurity of one solution darkened the evidence of another, that the clearest truths were become entirely problematical, and that it was even impossible to clear up any one of them, in this vast labyrinth of contradictory replies, and authorities.

The Doctor took a simple view of the subject. Amongst the questions delivered to him for solution, there were two hundred

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on the Jewish theology; four hundred and eighty on that of the various communions of the Greek and Roman churches; three hundred and twelve on the ancient religion of the Bramins; five hundred and eight on the sanscrit or sacred language; three on the present state of the Indian tribes; two hundred and eleven on the trade of Great Britain to India; seven hundred and twenty-five on the ancient monuments in the islands of Elephanta and Salsette, in the vicinity of Bombay; five on the antiquity of the world; six hundred and seventy-three on the origin of ambergris, and the properties of the different kinds of bezoar stones; one on the cause, not before investigated, of the current of the Indian ocean, which flows six months toward the east, and six towards the west; and three hundred and seventy-eight on the sources and periodical inundations of the Ganges.

Upon

Upon this occasion the Doctor was requested to collect on his travels every possible information respecting the sources and inundations of the Nile, a subject that had engaged the attention of the literati of Europe for so many ages. He considered, however, that it had been already sufficiently discussed, and that it was besides foreign to his mission.

Now, to each of the questions proposed by the Royal Society, he carried, one with the other, five different solutions, amounting in the whole to seventeen thousand five hundred; and supposing each of his nineteen brethren to have collected the same number, it followed that the Royal Society would have three hundred and fifty thousand difficulties to resolve, before they could establish any one truth upon a solid basis. Thus would the whole collection, far from causing each proposition to converge towards a com-

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most centre, according to the terms of the instructions, make the questions diverge from each other, without its being possible to approximate them.

Another reflection gave the Doctor still more uneasiness. That notwithstanding in his laborious researches, he had employed all the *sung-froid* natural to his country, and a politeness peculiar to himself, he had made implacable enemies of the greater part of the learned men with whom he had disputed. What then, said he, will become of the repose of my countrymen, when I shall have delivered to them, in my ninety bales, instead of truth, fresh subjects of doubts and disputations?

Full of perplexity and vexation, he was on the point of embarking for England, when the bramins of Benares informed him that the
superior

superior bramin of the famous pagod of Jagernaut, situated at the sea side, on the coast of Orisa, near one of the entrances of the Ganges, was alone capable of resolving all the questions of the Royal Society of London. He was in reality the most famous pandect, or doctor, ever heard of, and was consulted from all parts of India, and several of the kingdoms of Asia.

The Doctor instantly set out for Calcutta, where he applied to the East India company's super-intendant, who, to the honour of the British nation and the glory of the sciences be it recorded, completely equipped him for a journey to Jagernaut. He furnished him with a crimson silk palanquin, with curtains and gold studs; and two relays, consisting of four each, of stout coulis. In his retinue he had two common porters; a bister water-carrier; a gugglet-carrier; a hookah-bader;

bader ; a kittisol-gee, or umbrella-carrier, to shade him from the sun by day ; and a misol-gee, or flambeau-carrier, for the night. He had besides a wood-cutter ; two cooks ; two camels with guides to transport his provisions and baggage ; two pions or runners, to announce his coming ; four seapoys or rajah-pouts, mounted on persian horses, to escort him ; and a standard-bearer, displaying on his standard the arms of England.

With this very splendid equipage, the Doctor might have been mistaken for a clerk belonging to the East India company. There was, however, this difference, that instead of being sent in quest of presents, he was provided with them. In India it does not do to appear with empty hands before persons of dignity, and the super-intendant had accordingly supplied the doctor, at the company's expence, with a beautiful telescope, and

and a Persian foot carpet, for the chief of the Bramins; superb chintzes for his wife; and three pieces of china taffety, red, yellow, and white, to make scarfs for his disciples. The presents being carefully laid upon the camels, the Doctor proceeded in his palanquin, with the book of the Royal Society.

On the road he weighed with himself which question it would be best to propose first to the chief of the Bramins of Jagernaut, whether he should set off with one of the three hundred and seventy-eight, relating to the sources and inundations of the Ganges, or with that which respected the alternate and semi-annual course of the Indian Sea, which might tend to discover the sources and periodical motions of the ocean throughout the whole globe: But, notwithstanding this last question was infinitely more interesting to philosophy, than all those that had been proposed

posed for so many ages on the sources and risings of the Nile, it had not yet attracted the attention of the literati of Europe.

He therefore thought it would be better to interrogate the Bramin, upon the universality of the deluge, which had occasioned so many disputes. Or, going still higher, whether it was true, that the sun had repeatedly changed its course, according to the tradition, cited by Herodotus, of the Egyptian priests. Another question struck him forcibly, namely, the epoch of the creation of the world, which the Indians affirm to have lasted several millions of years. Sometimes he imagined it would tend to a more useful purpose, to consult him on the kind of government best calculated for any nation; and on the rights of man, regarding which no code is any where to be found: But these last questions were not in the book.

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It strikes me, however, said the Doctor, that it will be proper to enquire, in the first place of the Indian pandect, how to come at truth: If this is to be accomplished by reason, which is the method I have hitherto pursued, reason varies amongst men. I ought also to enquire of him where truth is to be sought—if in books, they universally contradict each other. And lastly, whether truth should be communicated to men, seeing that those who attempt to do so, are sure to involve themselves in a quarrel. Here are three preliminary questions which never entered the head of our illustrious president. If the Bramin of Jagerpaut can resolve them, I shall make myself master of a key to all the sciences, and, what will be still better, I shall live in peace with every body.

Reasoning thus with himself, the Doctor pursued his journey for ten days, during which

which time, he met with a multitude of folks returning from Jagernaut, every one enchanted with the learning of the chief of the Pandects, whom they had been to consult. He had now reached the banks of the gulf of Bengal.

On the eleventh day, at sun rise, he perceived the famous pagod of Jagernaut, built near the sea, over which is lofty red walls, its galleries, its domes, and its white marble turrets, seemed to have assumed the dominion. It is erected in the centre of nine avenues of evergreen trees, which diverge towards as many kingdoms. Each avenue is formed of trees of a distinct kind, of arec palm trees, cocoa trees, mangoes, fan palm trees, camphor trees, bamboos, almond trees, and sandal trees: And they lead towards Ceylon, Golconda, Arabia, Persia, Thibet, China, the kingdom of Ava, that of Siam, and the islands of the Indian Sea.

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The Doctor reached the pagod by the avenue of bamboos, which borders on the Ganges, and the enchanted islands at its entrance. Although built in a plain, it is so lofty, that notwithstanding he perceived it in the morning, he did not reach it till towards night. He was truly struck with admiration, when he considered, at a near approach, its magnificence and its size. Its bronze gates sparkled with the rays of the setting sun; and round its summit which lost itself in the clouds, the eagles hovered. It was surrounded by a large basin of white marble, which, on the surface of the transparent water it were filled with, reflected its domes, its galleries, and its gates. On every side were spacious courts, and gardens encompassed by commodious buildings, in which the officiating brahmins were lodged.

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The Doctor's pions, or running footmen, hastened to announce him, and instantly a band of young dancing girls, came out of one of the gardens, and ranged themselves before him, singing and dancing to the music of tabors. About the neck they had wreaths, and round the waist garlands of flowers, displayed in a very fanciful taste.

The Doctor, surrounded by their perfumes, their dances and their music, advanced to the gate of the pagod, at the extremity of which he perceived, by the light of several gold and silver lamps, the statue of Jagernaut in a pyramidal form, representing the seventh incarnation of Brama, without hands and feet, which he had lost in attempting to carry the world with a view to save it. Round the statue were lying, with their faces to the earth, penitents, some of whom promised aloud to suspend themselves by the shoulders

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to his chariot, on the day of Brama's festival; others that they would throw themselves under the wheels to be crushed to death.

Although the sight of these fanatics, who in pronouncing their horrible vows uttered deep groans, inspired the Doctor with a degree of terror, he was on the point of entering the Pagod, when an old Bramin, stationed at the gate, stopt him to enquire what had brought him thither. When he had learned the necessary particulars, he acquainted the Doctor, that on account of his quality of frangui, or impure person, he could not be allowed to present himself, either before Jagernaut, or his high priest, until he had thrice washed himself in one of the baths of the temple, and had thrown aside from his person whatever was the spoil of any animal; more especially the hair of cows, animals adored by

the Bramins, and that of hogs, creatures they held in abhorrence.

How then am I to manage, replied the Doctor? I have brought with me as a present to the chief of the Bramins, a Persian carpet, made of the hair of Angora goats, and stuffs of China silk; all things, rejoined the Bramin, offered to the temple of Jagernaut, or to the high priest, are purified by the gift itself: But in respect to your dress the case is otherwise. The Doctor was therefore under the necessity of taking off his coat of good English broad cloth, his goat skin shoes, and his beaver hat.

The old Bramin having washed him three times, wrapped him in cotton stained with sandal wood, and conducted him to the entrance of the chief Bramin's apartment.

Holding

Holding under his arm the book of questions, furnished by the Royal Society, the Doctor was about to go in, when his conductor asked him with what substance the book he had with him was covered. It is bound in calf, replied the Doctor. How! cried the enraged Bramin, did I not tell you that the cow was adored by the Bramins? and you dare to appear in the presence of their chief with a book covered with calf skin! The Doctor would have been reduced to the necessity of purifying himself in the Ganges, if he had not removed every difficulty by presenting his guide with a few pagodas.

He accordingly deposited once more his book of questions in the palanquin, and consoled himself for its loss, by reflections to this effect. "Every thing reckoned, I have only three questions to put to this learned

Indian,

Indian, and I shall be perfectly satisfied, if he will tell me by what means truth is to be sought, where it is to be found, and whether it is proper to communicate it to men?"

The old Bramin now introduced the Doctor, clad in his cotton dress, bare headed and bare footed, to the high priest of Jagernaut, in a spacious saloon, supported by columns of sandal wood. The walls, which were green, were formed of a composition of plaister and other materials, so brilliant and highly polished, that they reflected the figures of the company. The floor was covered with very fine mats, each six feet square. At the bottom of the saloon was an alcove, railed round with ebony; and within this alcove, through a lattice of red varnished India canes, the Doctor had a glimpse of the venerable chief of the Pandects, with his white beard, and three cotton threads passed round

round his head, according to the custom of the Bramins.

He was seated on a yellow carpet, with his legs crossed, in so perfect a state of immobility, that he did not even move his eyes. Some of his disciples kept the flies from him with fans made of peacock's feathers; others burned in perfuming pans the fragrant wood of the aloes; and others again played very softly on the dulcimer: As for the rest, whose number was considerable, and amongst them several faquira, joquis, and fantons, they were ranged in files on each side the room, and kept a profound silence, their eyes fixed on the ground, and their hands crossed on the breast.

The Doctor was desirous of advancing to the chief of the Pandects, to pay his respects to him, but his conductor kept him back to
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the distance of nine mats, telling him that the Omrah's, or great Indian lords, advanced no nearer; that the Rajahs, or sovereigns of India, only came to within six mats; the princes, sons of the Mogul, to three; and that the Mogul himself was the only person who had the honour to approach the venerable chief, to kiss his feet.

In the mean time several Bramins brought to the foot of the alcove, the telescope, the chintzes, the carpet, and the rolls of silk, which the Doctor's attendants had left at the entrance of the saloon. The old Bramin having surveyed them, without expressing any mark of approbation, they were carried into an inner apartment.

The Doctor was about to beg in a fine harrangue in the Indian tongue, when his guide stopt him, by desiring him to wait the interrogatories

interrogatories of the high priest. He accordingly squatted himself down, with his legs crossed like a taylor, according to the fashion of the country. He grumbled to himself, at all these formalities; but what will a man not do to come at truth, when he has gone all the way to India in quest of it!

Soon as he had seated himself the music ceased, and after a few moments of profound silence, the chief of the Pandects demanded of him why he had come to Jagernaut.

Although the high priest of Jagernaut delivered himself in the Indian language so distinctly as to be heard by a part of the assembly, his words were carried by a faquir, who gave them to another, and this one again to a third, who delivered them to the Doctor. He replied in the same language, that he was come to Jagernaut, to consult the chief of

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the Bramins, who had so high a reputation for knowledge, on the means to be pursued to come at truth.

The Doctor's answer was conveyed to the chief of the Pandects, by the interlocutors to whom the question had been entrusted; and the whole of the conversation was managed in the same way.

The hoary chief, drawing himself back a little, replied,—Truth is not to be known but through the means of the Bramins. The whole assembly bowed in admiration of the reply of the high priest.

Where, cried the Doctor, with some earnestness, is truth to be sought? All truth, answered the Indian sage, is contained in the four *beths*, written in the Schanscrit tongue an hundred and twenty thousand years ago, and

and the understanding of which is confined to the Bramins.

At these words the whole saloon echoed with applauses.

The Doctor, recovering his *sang froid*, delivered himself thus to the high priest of Jagernaut. Since God has enclosed truth in books, the understanding of which is reserved for the Bramins alone, it necessarily follows that God has denied knowledge to the greater part of men, who are even ignorant of the existence of the Bramins. Now, if this were the case, God would not be just.

Brama has so ordered it, replied the high priest; and the will of Brama can on no account be opposed. The applauses of the assembly were louder than ever. As soon as they had subsided, the Doctor proposed his

third question, whether truth should be communicated to men?

Frequently, said the old Pandect, it is prudential to conceal it from mankind in general, but it is always a duty to disclose it to the Bramins.

How! cried the Doctor in a rage, is truth to be disclosed to the Bramins, who conceal it from every body? indeed, indeed, the Bramins are very unjust.

No sooner were the last words uttered, than a violent tumult arose in the assembly. The auditors had heard, without a murmur, God taxed with injustice; but it was quite otherwise when this reproach was applied to themselves. The pandects, the faquirs, the the fantons, the joquis, the bramins and their disciples, all at the same time strove to argue
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against the Doctor. The high priest of Jagernaut put an end to the contention, by clapping together his hands, and pronouncing in a very distinct voice—The Bramins do not dispute like the doctors of Europe. He then rose, and retired amidst the acclamations of the whole assembly, who murmured loudly against the Doctor, and would probably have done him some mischief, had they not been restrained by their dread of the English, whose authority on the banks of the Ganges is so very great.

The Doctor having quitted the saloon, his conductor addressed him thus. Our most venerable chief, had you not made him angry, would have presented you, as is customary, with sherbet, betel, and perfumes. It is I who had reason to be angry, replied the Doctor, for having taken so much pains to no purpose. Pray what complaint has your chief

chief to make against me? How, replied the guide, did you not enter into a dispute with him? Do you not know that he is the oracle of all India, and that each of his words is a ray of knowledge? I ought never to have doubted it said the Doctor, putting on his coat, his shoes, and his hat.

It was a perfect storm, and the night was not far off—the Doctor was desirous of passing it in one of the lodgings of the pagod, but this was denied him because he was a frangui. As the ceremony had made him very thirsty he requested something to drink; water was brought him in a vessel, which was broken as soon as he had allayed his thirst, because, as a frangui, he had polluted it by drinking out of it.

The Doctor, not a little nettled, called together his retinue, who had prostrated themselves

themselves in adoration on the steps of the temple, and being seated in his palanquin, pursued his way back through the avenue of Bamboos, at the sea side, the night setting in, and the sky being covered with clouds.

On the road he entered upon the following reflections: The Indian proverb is very true which says, that every European who comes to India, acquires patience if he has it not, and loses it if he has it. For my part, I have lost mine. So it seems I could not be informed by what means truth is to be found, where it is to be sought, and whether it should be communicated to men! Thus is man condemned throughout the whole earth to errors and disputes: it was well worth the trouble to come to India to consult the Bramins!

Whilst the Doctor reasoned in this way
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with himself in his palanquin, one of those violent storms arose which in India are called typhons. The wind blew in from the sea, and occasioning a reflux of the water of the Ganges, made it surge and foam against the islands at the entrance. From the shore, columns of sand sprung up; and from the forests clouds of leaves, which were driven pell-mell across the river and the plains, and were borne high into the air. At times the wind collected in the avenue of Bamboos, and although these Indian reeds are as lofty as the largest trees, it shook and bent them like the grass of the meadows. Through the cloud of dust and leaves the long avenue of reeds appeared undulating, a part of them lying on the ground to the right and left, whilst the other part reared itself up with a murmuring noise.

The Doctor's retinue, dreading either to
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be crushed to death, or to be drowned in the water of the Ganges, which already overflowed the shore, made the rest of their way across the plains, directing their course at hazard towards the neighbouring heights. The night was shut in, and they walked for three hours amidst the most impenetrable darkness, without knowing whither they went, when suddenly a flash of lightning burst from betwixt the clouds, and illumined every part of the horizon. They now saw at a greater distance to the right the pagod of Jagernaut, the islands of the Ganges, the troubled sea, and right before, and close to them, a small valley and a wood betwixt two hills.

Hither they ran for refuge, and contrived amidst loud and incessant peals of thunder, to reach the entrance of the valley. It was flanked with rocks, and abounded with trees of a prodigious size. Although the tempest

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bent

bent their tops, their monstrous trunks were unshaken as the rocks which surrounded them.

This part of the ancient forest seemed the asylum of repose ; but it was penetrated with difficulty. At the skirt rattan reeds, winding in every direction, covered the foot of the trees, and creeping plants were intertwined from trunk to trunk. A strong rampart of leaves was thus formed on all sides, a few spots of verdure appearing through it, but to which there was no passage.

The rajah-pouts, however, opened one with their sabres, and the Doctor's whole suite entered with the palanquin. They fancied themselves sheltered from the storm, when the rain which fell very heavy, formed around them a thousand torrents. In this perplexity they perceived from beneath the trees a light and a hamlet. The misol-gee hastened

hastened thither to light his flambeau, but returned soon after, out of breath, exclaiming as he approached the company—do not come this way, I have seen a paria. Immediately the affrighted troop cried out with one consent—a paria! a paria!

The Doctor thinking it was a wild beast of some kind, armed himself with his pistols. What is a paria, said he to the torch bearer. It is a man, replied the other, destitute of faith, and subject to no law. It is, added the chief of the rajah-pouts, an Indian of so infamous a cast, that any one whom he merely touches is allowed to kill him. If we were to enter his habitation, we should be debarred for nine months the worship of the temples, and should be obliged to purify ourselves by bathing nine times in the Ganges, and having ourselves washed as often by the hands of a Bramin, in cow's urine. We will not enter the dwelling of a paria, exclaimed every Indian at once.

How have you learned, said the Doctor to his torch bearer, that your countryman is a paria, that is to say, without faith, and without law? Because, answered the torch bearer, when I opened the door of his hut, I saw him lying down, on the same mat, with his dog, and his wife to whom he was giving drink in a cow's horn. Every one of the Doctor's retinue repeated lustily, we will not enter the dwelling of a paria. You may remain here if you please, said the Doctor, for my part, all the casts in India are the same to me, when I wish to shelter myself from the rain.

In pronouncing these words, he leaped from his palanquin, and putting under his arm his book of questions and his night dress, with pistols in hand, he came to the hut. He had scarcely knocked at the door, when it was opened by a man with a very engaging physiognomy, who instantly drew back, say-

ing—master I am only a poor paria, who am unworthy to receive you ; but should you think proper to shelter yourself in my humble dwelling, you will confer upon me a particular honour. My brother, replied the Doctor, I most chearfully accept your hospitality.

The paria now went out with a torch in his hand, a load of dry wood on his back, and a basket filled with cocoa nuts and bananas under his arm. Approaching the people of the Doctor's retinue, who were seated under a tree at some distance from the cottage, he addressed them thus. Since you will not do me the honour to be my guests, here are fruits in the riad which you may eat without being defiled, and here is fire-wood to kindle, to dry you, and defend you from the tigers. May God bless and preserve you.

Having done this he returned to the cottage,

tage, and said to the Doctor, master, I repeat to you that I am no better than an unhappy paria ; but since I perceive by your complexion and your dress that you are not an Indian, I flatter myself that you will accept without repugnance the food which your poor servant has to offer you. At the same time he laid on a mat spread upon the ground, mangoes, cream-apples, ananas, potatoes baked in the ashes, broiled bananas, and a pot of rice prepared with sugar and the milk of the cocoa-nut. He then withdrew to his own mat, near his wife and an infant sleeping at her side in a cradle.

Virtuous man, cried the Doctor, thou art far my superior, seeing that thou doest good to those who condemn thee. If thou wilt not honour me with thy company on the same mat, I shall conceive that thou hast formed an unfavourable opinion of me, and will instantly quit thy cottage, at the risk of being

being drowned by the rain, or devoured by tigers.

The paria came and seated himself on the mat, and both fell to eating heartily. How happy was the Doctor! in the midst of the tempest he had the satisfaction, and it was no small one, to find himself in safety. The hut was so strong, that no external violence could shake it: besides its being seated in the narrowest part of the valley, it was built beneath a banyan tree, whose branches, which threw out bundles of roots at their extremities, formed as many arches to support the main trunk. The foliage of this tree was so thick, that not a drop of water could pass through it; and although the dismal howlings of the tempest, with loud claps of thunder at intervals, were distinctly heard within the hut, still the smoke of the fire, which went out at the middle of the roof, and the flame of the lamp, were not in the smallest degree agitated.

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The Doctor looked round him, and admired the serenity of the Indian and his wife. Their infant, olive coloured and polished like bronze, slept in a cradle, which the mother rocked with her foot, at the same time that she amused herself with making for it a collar of black and red angola peas. In short the very dog partook of the common happiness; lying near the fire with a cat, he from time to time half opened his eyes, and sighed at the sight of his master.

Loaded as the Doctor was, when he entered the hut, it was not possible for him to come provided with his hookah. The paria accordingly, who was no stranger to the luxury of smoking, which prevails so generally in India, brought him, as soon as the meal was ended, a cherut,* and a live coal. Hav-

* The Cherut, like the *Sagar* of the West-Indies, is a twisted tube of leaf tobacco, and is chiefly used by those whose poverty denies them the higher luxury of a Hookah.

ing lighted one for himself, he made a sign to his wife, who placed upon the mat two dishes of cocoa, and a large calabash filled with punch, which she had prepared during the supper, with arrack, citron juice, juice of the sugar-cane, and water.

Whilst they smoked and drank alternately in a very sociable way, the Doctor said to the Indian—in my opinion you are one of the happiest men I have ever met with, and consequently one of the wisest. Allow me to ask you a few questions. How comes it that you are so tranquil in the midst of this terrible storm? You have notwithstanding no other shelter than a tree, and trees attract lightning. Never, replied the paria, has lightning fallen upon a banyan tree. That is very singular, said the Doctor; it is undoubtedly because this tree, in common with the laurel, has a negative electricity. I do not understand you, answered the paria—my

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wife thinks it is because the God Brama one day took shelter under its foliage. • I am of opinion, for my part, that God, in these tempestuous climates, having provided the banyan tree with a very thick foliage, and vaults, formed by its branches, to shelter men from the storm, will not suffer them, when they have sought refuge beneath it, to be a prey to the lightning.

Your reply, observed the Doctor, is a very religious one : it appears that you owe your tranquility to a trust in God. Conscience is more to be depended upon in these cases than science. Tell me, I beseech you, what is your sect ; for you do not belong to any of those of India, since no Indian will have an intercourse with you. In the list of learned casts I was to consult on my way, I do not find that of the parias. In what canton of India is your pagod ? Every where, answered the paria ; my pagod is nature.

nature. I adore the great author of nature at sun rise, and I worship him when I lie down to rest. Instructed by misfortune, I never withhold my assistance from one more unhappy than myself. I endeavour to bestow happiness upon my wife, my child, and even my dog and cat. I look for death at the close of my life, as a pleasant slumber at the end of the day.

From what book have you drawn these principles, asked the Doctor? From nature, replied the Indian; I know of no other. It is indeed a large book, but who has taught you to read in it? Misfortune, said the paria: being of a cast reputed infamous in my country, and denied the privileges of an Indian, I have made myself a man—driven out of society, I have flown to nature.

But at least, in this solitude of yours, observed the Doctor, you have a few books?

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Not one, I can neither write nor read. You have saved yourself a vast many doubts and perplexities, said the Doctor, rubbing his forehead. For my part, I have been sent in quest of truth, from my native country, England, and have consulted the learned of many nations, with a view to enlighten mankind, and augment their happiness: but after many fruitless researches, and very warm disputes, I am led to conclude that the search after truth is a folly, because he who should succeed in finding it, would not be able to impart it, without making himself a great many enemies. Tell me sincerely, do you not hold the same opinion with myself on this subject? Although I am simply a poor ignorant man, answered the paria, since you permit me to offer my opinion, I must think that every one is obliged to seek truth for his own good and prosperity: he would otherwise become covetous, ambitious, wicked, superstitious, and even a cannibal, according

according to the prejudices or interests of those entrusted with his education.

The Doctor, who never lost sight of the three questions he had proposed to the chief of the pandects, was charmed with the paria's reply. Since you are of opinion, said he, that it is the duty of every one to seek truth, tell me, in the first place, what means should be employed towards the attainment of it; for our senses deceive us, and our reason misleads us still more. Reason differs almost universally amongst men, and is at the bottom, I believe, nothing more than the particular interest of each individual: and this may account for its varying so much throughout the whole earth. There are not two religions, two tribes, two families—what do I say? there are not two men who think exactly in the same way. How then are we to proceed in the search after truth, if the understanding fails us in that respect? It appears

pears to me, replied the paria, that it is to be done by the means of a simple heart. The senses and the understanding may err ; but a simple heart, although it may be deceived, never deceives.

Your reply is profound, said the Doctor. Truth is to be sought with the heart, and not with the understanding. All men feel in the same manner, but they reason differently, because the principles of truth are in nature, and the consequences they draw are founded in self-interest. It is with a simple heart, therefore, that truth is to be sought ; for a simple heart never feigns to understand what it does not understand, nor to believe what it does not believe : it does not assist to deceive itself, nor afterwards to deceive others. Thus a simple heart, far from being weak like those of the greater part of mankind seduced by their own interest, is strong, and such as is required in the search after, and preservation of

of truth. You have developed my idea, answered the paria, much better than I could have done myself: truth may be compared to the dew of heaven; to preserve it pure, it must be collected in a pure vessel.

Sincere man, said the Doctor, your observation is very just; but the great difficulty still remains to be cleared up. Where is truth to be sought? A simple heart depends on ourselves, but truth depends on other men. And where can it be found, if those who surround us are either misled by their prejudices, or corrupted by their interest, as is almost generally the case? In my travels I have visited many nations, have examined their libraries, and consulted their learned men: I have every where met with contradictions, with doubts, and with opinions a thousand times more various than their languages. If, then, truth is not to be found in the most celebrated depositories of human knowledge,

knowledge, where is it to be sought? To what purpose will it tend to have a simple heart, amongst men whose understanding is false, and the heart corrupted?

I should suspect truth, the paria replied, if I could obtain it in no other way than through the medium of men. It is not amongst them that we ought to seek it, it is in nature. Nature is the source of every thing which exists; her language is not unintelligible and variable, like that of men and their books. Men make books, but nature makes things. To found truth upon a book, would be as if we were to found it upon a picture or a statue, which can interest one country only, and which changes every day. Books are the art of man, but nature is that of God.

You are perfectly in the right, answered the Doctor, nature is the source of natural truths;

truths ; but where, for example, is the source of historical truths, unless it be in books ? And, again, with the help of these, how are we to assure ourselves of the truth of a fact which happened two thousand years ago ? Those who have transmitted it to us, were they without prejudices, without heat of party ? Had they a simple heart ? Besides, the books which hand down to us the occurrences of old times, require transcribers, printers, commentators, translators ;—and do not all these gentry, in a greater or less degree, mutilate truth ? As you have very justly observed, a book is merely the art of a man. We must therefore renounce all historical truths, since we have no other way to come at them but through the medium of men subject to error. Of what importance to our happiness, said the Indian, is the history of things past ? The history of what is, is the history of what has been, and of what will be.

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Very well, said the Doctor; but you will confess that moral truths are essential to the happiness of the human race. How are these to be found in nature? Animals make war amongst themselves, and kill and devour each other; elements battle against elements: should men engage against men in a similar state of warfare? By no means, answered the paria! every man will find the rule of his conduct in his own heart, if his heart be simple. There nature has implanted this law:—do not that to others which you would not wish others to do to you. 'Tis very true, observed the Doctor; she has regulated the general interests of mankind by our own particular ones: but how are we to come at the knowledge of religious truths, amidst the many traditions and modes of worship which divide nations? In nature herself, replied the paria; if we consider her with a simple heart, we shall discover God in his power, his intelligence, and his goodness: and as we are weak, ignorant,

ignorant, and wretched, this is sufficient to engage us to adore him, to pray to him, and to love him all our life, without disputing.

Admirable, cried the Doctor! But now tell me whether he who discovers a truth of any kind, ought to impart it to other men? By making it public, he is sure to be persecuted by a multitude of people who live by the opposite error, asserting that this very error is the truth, and that whatever tends to destroy, it is error itself.

Truth, answered the paria, must be communicated to men whose hearts are simple; that is to say, to good men who seek it, and not to the wicked who reject it. Truth is a rich pearl, and the bad man a crocodile who cannot apply it to his ears, because they are shut against its admonitions. If you cast a pearl to a crocodile, he will try to devour it, will break his teeth, and fly furiously at you.

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I have only one objection to make, said the Doctor, which is this: It follows from what you have just now advanced, that men are condemned to error, although truth be essential to them; for, since they persecute those who strive to impart it, where is the teacher who will dare to come forward for their instruction? Misfortune, replied the paria, which itself persecutes men for their instruction. Oh! exclaimed the Doctor, for once, my man of nature, I fancy you are mistaken. Misfortune makes men superstitious, and weakens the heart and the understanding. The more miserable men are, the more are they vile, credulous, and servile. This, observed the paria, is because they have not been sufficiently unfortunate. Misfortune resembles the black mountain of Bember at the extremity of the burning kingdom of Lahor: Whilst you ascend it you see around you, nothing but barren rocks; but when you have reached the summit, you perceive the
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sky over your head, and at your feet the kingdom of Cashemire.

Charming and just comparison, replied the Doctor, every one in this life has his mountain to climb. Yours, virtuous, solitary, must have been very steep and rugged, for you are raised above all the men I know. You have been very unhappy; but first tell me, why your cast is so contemned in India, and that of the Bramins so honoured? I am just returned from visiting the high priest of the pagod of Jagernaut, who has no more ideas than his idol, and who causes himself to be worshipped like a God.

The bramins, said the paria, have a tradition that at the creation of the world, they sprang from the head of Brama, and the parias from his feet. They add, moreover, that Brama one day in travelling requested food of a paria, who set before him human flesh.

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It is on these accounts that their cast is honoured, and ours despised, throughout India. We are not even allowed to approach the cities, and every nayre or rajah-pout may kill us with impunity, if we approach him within the reach of our breath.

By St. George, cries the Doctor, this favours highly of folly and injustice ! How have the bramins managed to succeed, in propagating such an absurdity amongst the Indians ? By teaching it them, replied the paria, from their infancy, and repeating it to them incessantly : Men are instructed like parrots. Unhappy man ! said the Doctor, what means have you pursued to extricate yourself from the abyss of infamy into which the bramins threw you at your birth ? No situation, it appears to me, can be more hopeless than that of a man vilified in his own eyes : It deprives him of the first of consolations ; for the most certain of all is, that we find in looking into ourselves. At

At first, answered the paria, I said to myself—is this history of Brama really true? The bramins, who are interested in giving themselves a celestial origin, are the only people who relate it. I have no doubt but they invented and propagated the fiction, that a paria endeavoured to make Brama a cannibal, to revenge themselves upon the parias who refused to believe the reports they spread abroad of their holiness.

I afterwards reasoned with myself thus : Granting this to have been the case, God is just, and cannot render a whole cast culpable for the crime of one of its members, of which it has not participated. But, supposing all the cast of the parias to have been originally accessory to this crime, their descendants have not been their accomplices. God no more punishes in the children the faults of their forefathers whom they have never seen, than punishes in the forefathers the faults of the children

children yet unborn. I will suppose again, that I, at this time, without having partaken of his crime, partake of the punishment of a paria perfidious to his God some thousand years ago: Still can any thing live and flourish under God's displeasure? If God had cursed me, nothing I should plant would thrive. At length I said to myself,—I will allow that I am hated by God, who confers benefits upon me: I will endeavour to render myself agreeable to him, by following his example, and will do good to those I ought to hate.

But how, asked the Doctor, did you manage to live, rejected thus as you were by every body? At first, the paria replied, I said to myself: If the world is thy enemy, be to thyself a friend. Thy misery is not beyond the strength of a man. However heavy the rain may be, a small bird receives but a single drop at a time. I went into the woods and along the sea shores in search of food,

food, but could seldom collect any thing besides wild fruits, and was hourly in dread of beasts of prey : Thus I knew that nature had made scarcely any thing for man alone, and that she had attached my existence to the very society which spurned me from its bosom.

I now frequented the deserted fields, which are very numerous in India, and never failed to meet with some nourishing plant that had survived the ruin of its cultivators. I travelled thus from province to province, certain of meeting every where with a subsistence amidst the ruins of agriculture. When I found the seeds of an useful vegetable, I put them into the ground, saying, if not for myself, 'twill be for others. I was less miserable at seeing I could do some good. One thing I desired passionately, it was to enter the cities. I admired from afar their ramparts and their towers, the prodigious concourse of barks on their rivers, and of caravans on their roads,

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loaded with merchandize which drew to one common centre from all parts of the horizon; the troops of soldiers on their way thither, from the distant provinces, to do duty; and foreign ambassadors, attended by their numerous suites, pushing forward to make their entry, either for the purpose of notifying fortunate events, or to contract alliances.

I approached their suburbs as nearly as I could with safety, contemplating with astonishment the long columns of dust raised by such a concourse of travellers, and leaped with joy at the confused noise which rushes from great and populous cities, and which in the adjacent plains resembles the murmuring of waves that break against the sea shore.

I said to myself——an assemblage of men of so many conditions, who unite their industry, their riches, and their pleasures, must
make

make a city a delightful residence. If I am not allowed to draw near to it in the day time, what will prevent my entering it at night? A feeble mouse, surrounded by so many enemies, passes to and fro at pleasure in the dusk, from the hut of the peasant to the palace of the king; and, to enjoy life, requires the light of the stars only; why should I need that of the sun?

I made these reflections in the environs of Delhi, and they inspired me with so much courage, that as soon as night had spread over the firmament her thick veil, I entered that city by the gate of Lahor.

I passed through a long solitary street, formed on each side by houses with terraces in front, supported by arches, beneath which were the tradesmen's shops. At certain distances I met with large caravanseras well secured, and spacious bazars, or market places,

ces, in which the most profound silence prevailed.

In approaching the interior part of the city, I crossed the superb quarter of the Omrahs, abounding in palaces and gardens situated at the side of the Gemna. The air was filled with the sound of instruments, and the sweet strains of dancing girls, who, by the light of torches, sang and danced on the rivers banks. I placed myself at the gate of a garden to enjoy so agreeable a spectacle, but was driven away by slaves, who beat most unmercifully the poor wretches they found there.

Leaving the quarter of the great, I passed near several pagods, where a vast number of miserable enthusiasts lay prostrate on the ground, and wept lamentably. I fled in haste from the sight of these monuments of superstition and terror, and soon after the
Mollahs,

Mollahs,† calling from on high, with shrill voice, the hour of the night, gave me to understand that I was not far from a mosque.

I came next to the European factories, with their pavillions, and watchmen, who cried incessantly, *kaber dar!* take care of yourself: and afterwards descried a large building, which I knew to be a prison, by the rattling of chains, and the groans that issued from it. Scarcely was I out of hearing of these, when my ears were assailed by the moans of the sick in an hospital, from whence were carried out cart loads of dead.

On my way I met with robbers running furiously through the streets, to escape from the patrols who pursued them; groups of beggars, who, notwithstanding they were heartily caned by slaves stationed there on purpose, craved at the doors of the palaces a few crumbs from the table; and in every part
women

† A Timekeeper.

women who prostituted themselves publicly for a livelihood.

At length, after passing through a very long street, I came to an immense square, which surrounds the fortress inhabited by the Great Mogul. It was covered with the tents of the Rajahs of his guards, and those of their squadrons, distinguished from each other by flambeaus, standards, and canes mounted with the tails of Thibet cows. A large moat filled with water, and the sides planted with artillery, surrounded the fortress.

By the light of fires kept by the guard, I had a perfect view of the castle, and saw with surprise the immense height of its towers, and almost immeasurable length of its ramparts. I had a violent propensity to enter within side; but was restrained by large korahs, or scourges, hung upon posts, the sight of which deprived me of every wish to
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put my foot in the square. I accordingly placed myself at one of the extremities, near some negro slaves, who were seated by a fire, and took a leisure survey of the imperial palace.

This, then, said I, is the dwelling of the happiest of men ! It is for his obedience that so many religions are propagated ; for his glory that so many ambassadors make their entry ; for his aggrandizement that so many provinces are exhausted ; for his pleasure that so many caravans travel ; and for his security that so many armed men watch in silence !

Whilst I was making these reflections, loud shouts of joy were heard throughout the whole square, and I saw eight camels pass by, decorated with streamers. I was informed that they were loaded with the heads of rebels, sent by the Mogul's generals from the province of Decan, where one of his sons, whom he had named Governor, had for three years made war against him. Shortly

Shortly after, a courier mounted on a dromedary, arrived full speed: His business was, to announce the loss of one of the frontier towns of India, through the treachery of the commander, who had delivered it up to the king of Persia.

Scarcely had this courier passed by, when another, sent by the governor of Bengal, came with the intelligence that the Europeans, to whom the emperor, on account of their commerce, had granted a factory at the entrance of the Ganges, had built a fortress there, and made themselves masters of the navigation of the river.

Some moments after the arrival of these two messengers, an officer at the head of a detachment of guards, sallied out from the castle, with orders from the Mogul to proceed to the quarter of the Omrahs, and bring from thence, loaded with chains, the three principal

principal ones, accused of having kept up a correspondence with the enemies of the state.

On the preceding day, he had arrested a Mollah, charged with having in one of his sermons pronounced an eulogy on the king of Persia, and having declared in the most unqualified way, that the emperor of India was an infidel, because he drank wine.

Lastly, news was brought, that the Mogul had just caused one of his wives and two captains of his guard to be strangled, they having been convicted of abetting his son's rebellion.

Whilst I was busied in reflecting on these tragical events, a large column of fire suddenly arose from one of the kitchens of the seraglio. The smoke, in thick volumes, reached the clouds; and the intense flame illumined the towers of the fortress, the fosses, the square,

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the minarets of the city, and extended to the very horizon.

Instantly the kettle drums, and the karnas or great hautboys, of the guard, sounded the alarm with a frightful clangor. Squadrons of cavalry dispersed themselves through the city, bursting open the doors of the houses near the castle, and forcing the inhabitants, whom they scourged without any mercy, to run to the fire.

I too was made sensible how dangerous the neighbourhood of the great is to little folks. The former may be compared to fire, which consumes even those who throw incense upon it, if they approach it too near.

I wished to escape, but every avenue was shut in upon me, and it would have been impossible for me to extricate myself, if God's providence had not so ordered it, that the side
where

where I had stationed myself was that of the seraglio. The eunuchs, who carried off the women upon elephants, assisted me not a little; for whilst, on all sides, the guards were forcing the mob, with scourges, to run to the help of the castle, the elephants, by sound of trumpet, obliged them to retreat.

Thus, now pursued by one party, now driven back by the other, I made my escape from this frightful chaos, and by the light of the fire, reached the opposite extremity of the suburb, where, far from the great, in humble cottages, the inhabitants reposed from their fatigues.

It was only now that I began to breathe; and reflections such as these occurred to me, when I had recovered myself from my fright.

I have at length seen a city! I have seen the residence of the masters of nations! Oh!

of how many masters are not they themselves the slaves! They obey, even at the season of repose, pleasures, ambition, superstition, avarice: and have to dread, during sleep itself, a crowd of wretched and malignant beings who surround them—robbers, beggars, courtizans, incendiaries; nay, their very soldiers, their nobles, and their priests. If thus harassed by night, what must a city be in the day time?

The troubles of man increase with his enjoyments. How deserving of pity is the emperor, who unites them all! He has to dread wars foreign and domestic; and the very objects which are his consolation and defence, his generals, guards, mollahs, women and children. The moats of his fortress cannot slay the phantoms of superstition, nor can his elephants, finely accoutred as they are, banish far from his presence the stern cares which hover round him.

I, for

I, for my part, have none of these evils to dread. No tyrant has usurped a dominion, either over my body, or my soul. I can serve God according to my conscience, and have nothing to dread from any man, if I can but forbear from tormenting myself. Indeed, a paria is less unhappy than an emperor.

In uttering these words, the tears started in my eyes. I fell on my knees, and thanked heaven, that, in teaching me to support my misfortunes, it had shewn me others of a more intolerable kind.

From that time I frequented the suburbs only of Delhi. I saw from thence the stars lighten the habitations of men, and blend themselves with their fires, as if the sky and the city had united in establishing one common empire. When the moon illumined this landscape, I perceived colours far different from those of the day, and gazed in silent admiration

admiration at the towers, the houses, and the trees, silvered over, and reflected at a distance in the Gemna.

I thus paraded at my ease, the large, solitary, quarters of the city, and was sometimes led to fancy that whatever I saw was my own. I should however, had I craved it, have been refused a single handful of rice, so odious had religion rendered me !

Not being able to live among the living, I sought a subsistence among the dead. I went to the burying places to eat on the tombs the food offered up by the piety of relations. I was fond, in places like these, of giving way to reflection. This, said I, is the city of peace. From hence power and pride are banished—here innocence and virtue are in safety. In this tranquil spot all the terrors of life are obliterated, even that of dying. This is the inn in which life's weary traveller rests for ever—where the poor paria reposes.

In

In the midst of these meditations, I found death desirable, and felt a hearty contempt for my existence. I viewed the eastern horizon, from whence a multitude of stars sprang up every moment; and notwithstanding their destiny was unknown to me, I perceived that it was connected with that of men, and that nature, having provided for their necessities so many imperceptible objects, had at least attached to their service those she offered to their view.

My soul soared into the firmament amongst the stars, and when aurora came to blend with their soft and eternal light her rosy tints, I imagined myself at the gate of heaven. But soon as the sun had gilt the tops of the pagods, I disappeared like a shadow. Far from men and their haunts, I went into the solitary fields, and laid myself at the foot of a tree, where I was lulled to sleep by the melody of the warblers over my head.

Unfortunate

Unfortunate and feeling man, said the Doctor, your recital is moving indeed ! trust me that cities for the most part ought to be seen at night only. After all, nature has her nocturnal beauties, which are not those the least interesting : a famous poet of my nation celebrated no others. But inform me how you contrived at length to make yourself happy by day ?

It was no little satisfaction to be so at night, replied the Indian. Nature resembles a fine woman, who, in the day discloses to the vulgar eye the beauties of her face only, but at night reveals to her lover her secret charms. If solitude, however, has its delights, it also has its privations. It appears to the unhappy man a tranquil port, from whence he observes the passions of others roll along, without being shaken by them. But whilst he congratulates himself on his immobility, time drags him on. The anchor is

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not to be cast in the current of life—alike it sweeps along with it, him who strives against its course, and him who abandons himself to it, the sage as well as the libertine, and both reach the end of their days, one after having abused, the other without having enjoyed them.

I had no desire to be wiser than nature, nor to find my happiness out of the laws she had prescribed to man. I was particularly solicitous to have a friend, to whom I could communicate my sorrows and my joys. Long time I sought such a friend amongst my equals, but could meet with none who were free from envy. I found one, however,—sensible, grateful, faithful, and inaccessible to prejudices: 'tis true, it was not amongst my own species that I succeeded, but amongst animals; 'twas the dog you see. It lay exposed, a young puppy, in the corner of a street, where it had nearly perished through

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hunger.

hunger. I was touched with compassion—I reared it—it became attached to me, and I made it my inseparable companion.

This was not enough—I needed a friend more unhappy than a dog, one versed in all the evils of human society, who could help me to support mine, who would be satisfied with the goods of nature, and would share with me the enjoyment of them. It is only by twisting round each other that two weak shrubs resist the storm.

Providence crowned my wishes by giving me a good wife. One night I repaired, as was customary, to the burying place of the bramins, and perceived there, by the light of the moon, a young female bramin half covered with a yellow veil. At the sight of a woman of the blood of my tyrants, I started back with horror; but compassion urged me insensibly towards her, when I observed the
task

task with which she was busied. She was placing food upon a hillock which covered the ashes of her mother, burned alive some time before with the body of the husband, in conformity to the usage of the cast. Another ceremony engaged her attention—she burned incense to call up the shade of her deceased friend and parent.

Tears came into my eyes, at the sight of one more unfortunate than myself. Alas! said I, I am bound by the bonds of infamy, thou by those of glory. I live tranquil, at least, at the bottom of my precipice—thou art always trembling at the edge of thine. The same destiny which cut off thy mother, threatens thee also. Thou hast but one life, and thou hast to dread two deaths. If thy own death should not convey thee to the tomb, that of thy husband will drag thee thither alive.

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I wept,

I wept, and she wept. Our eyes, bathed in tears, met and discoursed together in the silent language of the unhappy : She turned aside hers, wrapped herself in her veil, and departed.

The following night, I returned to the same spot. On this occasion she had placed on her mother's tomb a larger quantity of food. She judged that I needed it ; and as the bramins frequently poison their funeral offerings, to prevent the parias from eating them, to satisfy me as to the use of hers, she had brought nothing but fruit.

I was moved by this token of humanity ; and to testify the respect I bore to her affectionate gift, instead of taking the fruits, I joined with them flowers. I chose poppies, to express the concern I took in her grief.

The night after I saw with joy that she approved

approved my homage—the poppies were watered, and she had placed at some distance from the tomb another pannier of fruit.

Pity and gratitude made me bold. Not daring to speak to her as a paria, for fear of offending her, I undertook, as a man, to express to her all the affections she had kindled in my soul. To make myself understood, I borrowed, according to the custom of India, the language of flowers—to the poppies I added marigolds. The succeeding night I found the marigolds and the poppies watered.

I became more venturous. In my next nightly visit, I joined with the poppies and the marigolds, a flower from which a black die for leather is extracted, as the expression of an humble and ill-fated love. At early dawn of day I ran to the tomb; but found my last flower withered for want of water.

The

The following night, with a trembling hand, I placed there a tulip, whose red leaves and black heart expressed the fire that consumed me. The morning came, but not to my relief—the tulip was in a withered state.

I cannot express to you my chagrin, which however, did not prevent my making another attempt. When all was hushed, and each inhabitant of Delhi retired to rest, I carried to the tomb a rose bud with its thorns, as a symbol of my hopes, mixed with many fears. But what was my despair, when I perceived at day-break my rose bud far from the tomb! I thought I should have gone distracted.

Still, whatever might happen, I resolved to speak to her, and accordingly on the succeeding night I threw myself at her feet. I held out to her my rose bud, but the power of speech was denied me:

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The bramin woman broke silence. Unhappy man, said she, your attentions bespeak love, but soon, alas! I shall be no more. Soon shall I follow the example of my mother, and accompany to the funeral-pile my husband who is just dead. He was old—I married him when an infant. Adieu—retire and forget me—in three days I shall be reduced to ashes.

In uttering these words she sighed. For my part, overwhelmed with grief, I ventured to reply thus. Wretched bramin woman, nature has burst asunder the bonds which society imposed upon you: conclude by breaking those of superstition. It is in your power to do so, by taking me as your husband.

What! replied she, weeping, shall I escape from death to live with thee in infamy! if thou lovest me, leave me to die.

God

God forbid, I cried, that I should extricate you from your misfortunes, only to plunge you into mine ! Dear and lovely woman, let us fly together to the retreats which the forest afford—it is better to confide in tigers than in men. But heaven, in which I trust, will not forsake us. Let us fly:—love, the night, thy wretchedness, thy innocence—every thing favours us. Let us hasten, unfortunate widow ! already thy pile is prepared—already thy dead husband summons thee to it. Poor, feeble, bent-down plant, support thyself upon me, and I will be thy palm-tree.

She groaned heavily, and casting a look on the tomb of her mother, then towards heaven, let fall one of her hands carelessly into mine, and with the other took my rose bud. Instantly I caught hold of her arm, and we betook ourselves to flight. On our way I threw her veil into the Ganges, to persuade her relations that in her despair she had drowned herself.

We

We walked for several nights by the river's side, concealing ourselves by day in the rice fields, and at length reached this part of the country, which old wars have depopulated. I penetrated into the middle of this wood, where I have built the cottage you see, and planted a small garden. I revere my wife as the sun, and I love her as the moon. In this solitude we are every thing to each other. In the world one was despised, the other was unhappy : but as we esteem each other mutually, the praises I give her, and those she bestows upon me, seem sweeter than the applauses of the multitude. In concluding his recital, the paria cast a tender look at his infant in the cradle—then at his wife, who shed tears of joy.

The Doctor, drying up his own, said to his landlord : in good truth, what is honoured amongst men frequently merits their scorn,

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and what is despised by them frequently deserves to be honoured. But God is just;—you are a thousand times happier in your obscurity, than is the high priest of Jagernaut in all his glory. In common with the whole of his cast, he is exposed to all the revolutions of fortune. The plagues of the civil and foreign wars which for so many ages have laid waste your fine country, for the most part fall on the bramins, who are frequently addressed on the score of forced contributions, in consequence of the dominion they exercise over the minds of the people.

But what renders their case still harder, they are the first victims of their inhuman religion. By dint of preaching error, they are themselves so caught by his contagion, as to lose the sentiment of truth, of justice, of humanity, and of piety. They are bound in the chains of superstition they have forged for
their

their countrymen. Every moment they are obliged to wash, to purify—and are forced to abstain from a great number of innocent enjoyments. Lastly, the very recital fills me with horror, by a consequence of their barbarous dogmas, they see their relations, mothers, sisters, nay, their own children, burned alive. Thus does nature, whose laws they have violated, punish them. You, on the other hand, are allowed to be sincere, good, just, hospitable, and pious: and by your humility itself, you escape the blows of fortune, and the evils of opinion.

The conversation being ended, the paria took leave of his guest, whom he left to his repose, and retired into a small inner apartment, with his wife and the child's cradle.

In the morning, at day-break, the Doctor was awakened by the singing of birds nestled

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in the branches of the banyan-tree, and by the voices of the paria and his wife engaged in their morning prayer. He got up, and was very sorry to find, when this exemplary couple opened the door to bid him good day, that there was no other bed in the cottage besides the conjugal one, and that they had sitten up all night to yield it to him.

After they had made their salem (the Indian salutation) they set about getting ready the breakfast; and in the mean while the Doctor took a turn in the garden, which, as well as the cottage, he found surrounded by arches of the banyan-tree, so interwoven that they formed a kind of hedge impenetrable even to the sight. He could perceive only, above their foliage, the red sides of the rock which flanked every part of the valley, and from whence issued a small spring that watered the garden.

It was planted without any order. In it were seen, confusedly scattered, mangostan, orange, cocoa, batan, mango, jaca, banana, and other trees, all loaded with flowers or fruit, even to their very trunks. Round the arec palm-tree the betel twined, and the pepper plant round the sugar cane. The air was filled with a variety of perfumes.

The sun had already scaled the horizon, and illumined the tops of the trees, upon which snakes, shining like rubies and topazas, vaulted from branch to branch; whilst the bengalis, birds peculiar to Bengal, and others of the feathered tribe, warbled from their nests their melodious concerts.

Every learned and ambitious thought banished far from him, our philosopher was tasting the sweets of this charming retreat, when the paria came to invite him to breakfast.

fast. Your garden, said the Doctor, is delightful : I find no other fault with it but that it is too small. Were I in your place, I would add a bowling green, and extend it into the forest. Master, answered the paria, the less space any one occupies, the more he is sheltered : a leaf suffices for the nest of a *tati*. †

They now entered the cottage, in a corner of which they found the paria's wife giving the breast to her infant : the breakfast was displayed in a simple order.

After a silent repast, the paria, observing the Doctor anxious to depart, addressed him thus. My guest, the plains are still covered by last night's rains—the roads are impracti-

† A Bird of the East-Indies, which fastens its Nest to the leaf of a Tree by a kind of thread.

cable ;

cable; spend this day with us. It is impossible, said the Doctor, on account of my retinue. I see, replied the paria, that you are in haste to quit the country of the bramins, to return to the land of Christians, whose religion makes men live as brethren. The Doctor sighed and rose up.

The paria made a sign to his wife, who, with downcast eyes, and without speaking, presented to the Doctor a basket filled with flowers and fruit. The paria engaged to speak for her—master, said he, we have neither ambergris, nor aloe wood, to perfume our guests according to the custom of India: we have only flowers and fruit. I trust, however, that you will not despise this small basket, filled by my wife's hands. In it there are neither poppies nor marigolds, but jasmins and bergamot flowers, symbols, by the lastingness of their perfumes, of our affection,

tion, the remembrance of which will continue when you are far from us.

The Doctor took the basket, and said to the Indian—I want words to acknowledge your hospitality, and to testify to you all the esteem I bear you. Accept this gold watch, it is made by Graham, the most celebrated watchmaker in London. To this the paria replied—master, we have no need of a watch: we have one which goes always, and is never out of order; it is the sun. My watch, rejoined the Doctor, strikes the hours. Our birds sing them, answered the paria.

At least, said the Doctor, take these coral beads, to make red collars for your wife and child. My wife and my child, replied the Indian, will never want red collars whilst our garden produces angola peas.

Vouchsafe

Vouchsafe then, said the Doctor, to accept these pistols—they will defend you in your solitude from thieves. Poverty, answered the paria, is a rampart which keeps the thieves from us: the silver with which your arms are mounted would be enough to attract them. In the name of God who protects us, and from whom we wait our recompense, do not deprive us of the price of our hospitality.

I must request of you, however, said the Doctor, to keep something in remembrance of me. Well, my guest, replied the paria, since you will have it so, I will venture to propose an exchange. Take my betel box,† it will serve to hold your snuff; and your snuff-box will contain my betel. I shall then possess something to remind me that a philosopher of Europe did not disdain to accept the hospitality of a poor paria.

† A Tobacco-box,

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The exchange being made, the Doctor went out, and called together his retinue, who, dripping with rain, and benumbed with cold, had spent a very bad night. After embracing the paria, he got into his palanquin.

The paria's wife remained weeping at the door of the cottage, with the child in her arms; but her husband accompanied the Doctor to the skirts of the wood, heaping blessings upon him. May God, said he, reward you for your goodness to the unfortunate! May he accept me as a sacrifice for you! May he prosper your return to England, that country of friends and learned men, who seek the truth over the whole earth for the happiness of mankind!

I have travelled, replied the Doctor, over one half of the globe, and have seen every where nothing but error and discord: I have
found

found truth and happiness in your cottage alone.

They now separated, but not without discovering symptoms which a modern philosopher would ascribe to the weakness of human nature. The Doctor had got a considerable distance on his way, when, looking round, he saw the good paria at the foot of a tree, making signs with his hands to bid him adieu.

On his return to Calcutta, the Doctor embarked for Chandernagore, whence he sailed for England. When he arrived at London, he sent his ninety bales of manuscripts to the president of the Royal Society, who deposited them in the British Museum, where, at this very hour, the literati and journalists are still employed in making from them, translations, concordances, eulogies, phillipics, criticisms, and pamphlets.

As

As to the Doctor, he kept to himself the three replies of the paria upon truth. He frequently took snuff out of the betel box : and when any of his friends asked him what were the most useful facts he had collected on his travels, he replied, Truth is to be sought with a simple heart ; it is not to be found out of nature ; and is to be communicated to men of worth only. To which he added—there is no real happiness without a good wife,

